

THE

DANGER

of Deferring

Repentance.

Discovered

By that Reverend and Faith-
ful Minister of the

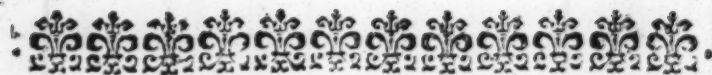
WORD

WILLIAM FENNER

Late Pastour of *Rockford* in *Essex*.

L O N D O N,

Printed by *W. L. and T. J.* for *Williams*
Thackery, at the *Angel* in
Duck-lane 1676.



Imprimatur,

*Tho. Tomkyns Reverendissimo Christo
Patri ac D. D. Gilberto divina Provi-
dentia Archi-Episcopo Cantuariensi a
Sacris Domesticis.*

September 7.
667.





A Sermon of Mr. *William
Fenners*, at *Maidstone*:

Septemb. 23. 1629.

PROV. I. 28.

Then they shall call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.

There is a good English Proverb amongst us, That he that neglects the Occasion, the Occasion will neglect him. Solomon wisely begins his Proverbs with it: for he bringeth in the wisdom of his Father in these five Particulars:

First, Making a general Proclamation in the 20. verse: Wisdom cryeth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets. He compareth God unto a Cryer that goeth up and down the City from street to street, and from doore to doore, crying his Commoditie, even the richest that euer was, which is a Christ, a Christ for Redemption,

The Danger of

dempcion, a Christ for Sanctification, a Christ to enlighten those that walk in darkness, and in the shadow of death: He, every one that thirsteth, here is a Christ for you.

Secondly, Here is a merciful Reprehension in the 22. verse: Oh ye foolish, how long will ye love foolishness, and ye scorers take pleasure in scorning? Foolish indeed to be without Christ, foolish to be without Grace, foolish to chaffer away our souls for sin: How long ye scorers will ye take pleasure in scorning? Will you still persist in your wickedness and never have done with your sins? Will you never turn back again, but damn your souls for ever: O ye foolish how long will ye love foolishness?

Thirdly, Here is a gracious Exhortation in the 23 verse: Turn you at my correction, Lo, I will pour out my mind unto you, and make you to understand my words: As if he should say Do you not see how you are going apace to confusion, and that the way you take leadeth unto destruction; turn ye therefore, turn back again, for there is a Christ behind you: O turn ye, for if you go on in your sins ye perish for ever.

Fourthly, Here is a yearning promise made unto the world, in the end of the 23 verse: I will pour out my spirit upon you, and cause you to understand my words. As if he should

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say, return back again with me, and you shall have better welcome then you can possibly have, if you go on in your sins, the Devil will never let you gain so much by your living in your lusts, as you shall do by repentance for them, and forsaking of them: For behold I will pour out my spirit upon you, whereby you shall be far greater gainers, then you shall be by your sins.

Fifthly, Here is a grievous threatening against the World, even all those that have loitered out the day of Grace: as time and tide stays for no man, no more doth the day of grace: Because I have called, and you have refused, I have exhorted, but you have not regarded: I have denounced judgements against you for your sins, but you have hardened your hearts: Now a day of woe and misery shall come upon you: a time of vengeance and desolation shall overtake you: there will a day come, wherein there shall be weeping, and crying: Mercy (Lord) Mercy. But I told you before-hand, what you shall trust to: let this be your lesson, now I call and you shall not hear: now I stretch out my hands, but you will not regard: You shall see me early, but you shall not find me, and shall cry, but you shall not be heard.

The words are a Thunderclap against all those that procrastinate their repentance, and

return home unto God. Where note, first, the Parties themselves, that do prolong this time of Grace, they, that is, they who when God calls on them, will not hear when God invites them by his Mercies. Patience, and Forbearance, by his Ministers and Servants, by his Corrections and Judgements, by all fair means and foul means, yet withstanding the means of grace: They are the men, they shall call, but God will not answer.

Secondly, Here is their seeking after God, They shall call upon me.

Thirdly. Here is their earnest and diligent seeking unto God: they shall not only call, but seek too, and not only seek, but seek as to labour to find: they shall seek me early, even strive to go about it with all haste, and flee to repentance, but they shall not find me.

Fourthly, Here is the unseasonableness of the time of their seeking, then, that is a demonstration, then: even a time which the Lord points at, as if he should say, you shall see, then, these men will be of another mind, then they will be glad to be converted, then they will be glad to come out of their sins, then they will be glad to get Grace, and seek reconciliation with me God; but alas, they saw not this then, but God fore-saw it well enough: Then shall they call but I will not answer, they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me. Last

Lastly, Here is the frustration of their hope, which hath two things in it ;

First, In regard of their selves, in regard of the state of their seeking, it being not aright.

Secondly, In regard of the Justice of God, who rewards every man according to his works. But I will not hear them.

Whence observe this point of Doctrine.

DOCTRINE I.

Those that will not hear God when he calleth them, God will not hear them when they call on him. Those that will not hear the Lord when he calleth on them by the Ministry of his Word, and voice of his Spirit the Lord will not hear them, when in their misery they call upon him.

Thus the Lord dealt with the people in Ezekiel's days: The Lord called them to Repentance and Obedience, but when they stood out, and neglected the opportunity of Grace, and seasons of conversion, see how God deals with them: Though they cry in my ears, with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them (saith the Lord.) When men have gone beyond the time of Gods mercy, and out-rowed the ride of Gods forbearance and will not return, the Lord sets it down with himself, that his wrath shall return upon them,

them, he will no longer forbear, they had a time wherein the Lord did pitty them, and offered Grace and Mercy unto them, but they neglecting this season, and notwithstanding this proffer of Grace, God resolves with himself they shall never have it again: There was a time wherein God did pitty them, but now he will not pitty them any more; Twenty five years he called unto them, and sought to bring them home; but because they stood out and refused, the Lord saith, I will love Ephraim no more.

Beloved there is a double day, a white day and a black day; there is a day of Salvation, Isa. 49. 9. This is the day, in which the Lord said to the Prisoners, Come forth: and to those that lye in their sins, Repent and believe. Now if any man will come forth a humble his Soul before the Lord, let him come and welcome, for it is a day of Salvation. But there is another day of Damnation, which is a dark day, a black and a dusky day, wherein the Lord will visit the sins of the world, and revenge the quarrel of his Covenant, Hos. 9. 7. The day of visitation is come, yea, the day of repentance; the people shall know it: The Prophet is a fool, and the Spiritual man is mad. Beloved. we are fools, and all the spiritual men under heaven are mad, that lay not this day to heart: for the
Day

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Day of the Lord is a day of visitation and all the world shall rue it, though now men sleep in security. If once mercy be rejected, and God turn away his ear from a man, then grace shall be no more, the door of life shall for ever be shut up against him, and when once this day comes, he hath lost his own peace, and deprived himself of eternal happiness.

Now there are three Reasons of this point; the first is, The Law of Retaliation; of rendering like for like, which is the justest Law that can be made with man: For to give unto every man according to his works, to make him take such as he brings (as the Heathen calls it) to give a man quid pro quo. Now if GOD call upon thee, and thou wilt not hear, it is righteousness with God, yea, equity with God (that is; more) that when thou callest on him, he should not hear thee, for thus runs the tenure of Gods Word, Prov. 28.9 He that turns away his ear from hearing the Law, even his Prayer shall be abominable. He that turns away his ear from Gods Law, God will turn away his ear from his Prayer, He that turns, it is spoken in the present tense; that is, he that now turns away his ear, his prayer shall be abominable (in the future tense;) that is, the Lord marks what Master or Servant, what Father or Mother, what Husband or Wife, what man or woman

it is, that turns away the ear of his head, or the ear of his heart from hearing his Will, and obeying of his Commandments; the Lord takes special notice of it, and sets it down in his Kalender and records it in his Memorial keeping a strict account thereof, as if God should say, Well is it so? I now call, and will not this man, or that woman answer? do I not stretch out my hands and will not they take care to obey me? Well, let them alone (saith God) there is a Day coming that I shall be a hearing of them; times of sorrow and misery will take hold of them and then they in their afflictions will cry unto me, but I will not hear, they will beg for mercy, but I will not regard; they will seek me early, but they shall not find me.

It was one of the Articles of High Treason brought in against Cardinal Woolsey, that he had the pox, and stinking breath, and yet durst come into the Kings presence. So it will be an Article against thee of High Treason before the King of Heaven, if thou come into his Presence with the stinking breath of thy sins, living in thy lust, and wallowing in thy filthiness: all thy prayers are but so many stinking breaths in the nostrils of thy Lord; and every duty that thou performest unto the Lord, shall be as so many Articles of high treason against thee to condemn thee, because thou livest in rebellion, and a Traitor against God. His

His Prayer shall be abominable: he doth not say, I will turn away mine ear from hearing his prayer which turns away his ear from hearing my Law (that is the true exposition of the words:) no, like for like is sometimes injustice, for if a man should strike a Magistrate a box on the ear, it were not justice for him to give him another, for it is a greater sin to strike a Magistrate, then any other common person: and therefore a greater punishment the Law requireth. So God doth not say, he will turn away his ear from the hearing his prayer, but will serve him in a worse kind: he will count it abominable, yea, abomination (in the abstract) it shall be loathsome, yea, loathsomeness it self, in the worst manner. Gal. 9. As a man soweth, so shall he reap, if thou sow sparingly, thou shalt reap sparingly: If thou sow a dull ear to Gods Word, thou shalt reap a dull ear from God to thy prayer: for God will reward every man according to his works.

Secondly, Because the time of Gods attributes, both Mercy and Justice have their season in this life: and when Mercy hath acted her part, then cometh Justice upon the Stage and acteth her part; so that God will have his Attributes manifested to all the sorts of men, yea, to the face of the whole world. There is no market nor fair day that lasteth alwaies

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Country will not come in, the Tradesmen will put up their wares and be gone : but if they come in time, they may have a penny-worth otherwise if they come too late, they will have none: For the Merchant will not always dwell in Tents but away he goeth and will not stay for them. Beloved, Gods standing is now open and his shop is set wide unto the Sons of men, if men will not come in, cheapen, and buy without money, whilst God offers his wares, he will put them up and be gone : for the Merchant will not lose his wares, which he should do, if he should always remain in the open air with them ; if he always continue in the fields expecting Customers, his Wares would spoil and rot. So it is with God, how many sweet counsels doth he lose ? how many sweet exhortations ? How many blessed Sermons and holy Sacraments, and Sabbathes doth he lose ? How many checks of Conscience ? How many Days of Grace, and Motions of his Spirit have been squandered away in vain ? Would you think that God will lose all these, and let them rot upon the Stall, with staying for you ? No, no, the Day of Grace and Mercy will have an end, and then the Day of wrath and vengeance will step up : To day if you will hear his voice, then harden not your hearts : then they have hardened their hearts, and would not be

by Gods mercy to forsake their sins. Therefore he sware, in his wrath that they should never enter into his rest, If it be so with you, as it was with Israel in the wilderness in the day of temptation, you do not know but that your sins may now begin to pluck vengeance upon you: I tell you, if you harden your hearts this day you do not know but that this very day the Lord may clap one Daub upon your heads, that you shall never enter into his rest for one day and the self same occasion lasts not always: as every day is not a Market day, nor every week in the year a fair week, nor every season in the year a time for Spring or Harvest: so every day of a mans life may not claim to be the day of Grace. Therefore if a man fore-saw it now, he fore-saweth his own happiness, and putteth off his own peace for ever.

Excellent is that annotation of Gregory, on Job 27. 9. Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him? Beloved, now Gods patience is troubled, wilt not thou repent? Now Gods Spirit is troubled, wilt not thou obey? Now Gods Justice is troubled, wilt not thou relent? Now Gods Spirit is troubled, wilt thou refuse to hearken? will God hear his cry? He speaketh interrogatively: as if he should say, Art thou so mad, so vain, so foolish to promise to thy self, being an hypocrite, that God will hear

hear thy prayer ! Oh no , then justice come
to take place.

Thirdly, It is Gods use to do so in other things
even upon the contempt of temporal blessings
and therefore much more in matters of Grace
and Salvation. Thus God promised to give
Israel the Land of Canaan, Numb. 12. 27. but
the text saith, They tempted God ten times
that is, (as some Expositors expound it) many
times, or (as others) ten several times. But
what ever the meaning of the text be, certain
ly it was very many times: so long, till at last
He swore in his wrath, that they should never enter
into his rest. Beloved, though there be many
hot swearers that regards not an Oath : yet
certainly, if the Lord swear, we may believe
him : the Word of God is as strong as Oath
if he say it upon his word, we are bound to be-
lieve it ; how much more then when he con-
firms it with an Oath. Therefore if the Lord
swear, thou shalt not, how darest thou ? How
canst thou hope or think ever to enter into
his rest ? This was almost forty years before
they dyed, that the Lord made this Oath
against them : and God knows how many thou-
sands of them fell short, not only of the Land
of Canaan, but also of the Kingdom of Hea-
ven.

So God took Isaac, an hundred and seven-
ty years old : he dyed : twenty years be-
fore he offered

offered him grace and repentance, but he would not take warning : a Mocker he was, and a Mocker he would be, for he mocked Isaac when he was a Child of six years old ; and no means would reclaim him, before he heard the voice, Cast out the Bond-woman and her Son : But with him (saith God) for he shall never be heir with thy Son : This was an hundred and seventeen years before Israels death.

And so God took Saul, five and thirty, or six and thirty years before he dyed, according to Josephus Chronology (if it be true) howsoever he took him divers years before his death ; for so the Scripture makes it plain, 1 Sam. 15. 9. The strength of *Israel* will not lye nor Repent : for he is not a man that he should Repent. Therefore because thou hast rejected the Word of the Lord, the Lord hath also rejected thee from being King. And do not think thou by thy prayers, and crying God mercy, canst ever alter him, for his counsel is immutable, and he is strong in his decree, and cannot change : Hitherto Grace and Mercy hath been offered thee, which if thou hadst embraced, thou mightest have found Mercy from the Lord, and the Kingdom should have been established and confirmed unto thee ; but now it is too late, For the strength of *Israel* cannot lye.

God took Esau fifty years before his death :

for so long he lived, after he sought the blessing with tears; but he was a hunting when God was calling; He was following his Prophane-ness, when God was waving him to Repentance: At last when he called for repentance and sought it earnestly, yea, his soul was careful for to get it: yet he could never obtain it, though he sought it earnestly with tears fifty Years before he dyed.

Now if the Lord so severely punish contempt of temporal blessings: O how will he punish the contempt of proffers of Grace and Salvation! I tell you God will be more strict in rebuking of this sin, than of any other sin; he will come with Martial Law against all those that contemn his Gospel, John 3. 18. He that believeth not is condemned already.

Doth Christ preach repentance and salvation, and the Kingdom of God, and wilt thou not repent and believe? Martial Law (beloved) Martial Law, hang him up, for he is condemned already: Even like a Souldier that rebels against his General, or forsakes his Colours, they do not cast him into Prison, or lay for the Assizes or Sessions, but gibe him Martial Law, even hang him up: So if the Lord sound the Gospel in thine ears, and offers thee conditions of peace, knocking at the doore of thy heart by his Spirit, and thou re-

fuse

use to open to him, thou art condemned already ; For the strength of Israel cannot lye, nor repent. **W**herefore take heed now whiles his word sounds in thine ears, while his spirit secretly whispers in thy heart to thee ; open to him, for else thou art condemn'd for ever.

Take notice then, that God doth commonly give men a day, and no man nor Angel doth know how long this day lasteth ; to some it ushereth to their last gasp, to some to their old Age, and to some it is cut off in their Childhood : God gave the Angels a day, the which because they neglected, they are reserved in chains of darkness, until the great judgement day. God gave Cain a day, Gen. 4. During all the time of this day, though Cain sinned again and again, and went on in his sins a great while, yet he heard nothing but a still voice ; I thou doest well *Cain*, shalt thou not be accepted ? but if thou do ill, sin lyeth at the door : But when no means will prevail, but Cain will go on, adding sin to sin, and murder unto all the rest of his sins, and so let go the season of Mercy : the Lord tells him from Heaven, that the day of Grace is past the Gate of Mercy is shut against thee, For thou art now accursed from the earth ; As if the Lord should say, Before I gave thee a day of Salvation, and offered thee Mercy, but thou wouldst not ac-

cept of it, but now I have clapt a curse upon
thy soul, that thou shalt never claw off. **S**o
God gave Nineveh a day to repent, Jonah said
Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed.
God gave the Fig-tree a day, even three years
before he would have it cut down. God gave
the old **M**ozid a day of an hundred and twenty
years: During this time, God sent unto
them Noah, a Preacher of righteousness, long
call unto them to repent; and to set it down
also, that his spirit should not always strive with
man, but his time shall be an hundred and twenty
years: Yet one writeth the Lord cut off twenty
of the hundred and twenty years, because of
their iniquities; which were so grievous that
they provoked him so much, that they hasten-
ed him to come before he would have done. **J**et
all this space if they had repented, they would
have found mercy from the Lord; but when
this time was gone, and the day of grace was
out, the Deluge came in upon them, and
God by his judgements overthrew the whole
world.

Object. You may ask me, When this day of
season of grace doth end or cease?

Answ. I answer, that neither men nor
Angels can tell: But this I say: It may be yet the
day of grace waiteth unto thee: Now it may be
God warms thy heart, and gives thee grace
purpose

purposes and resolutions: Now it may be the Lord Jesus passeth by thee in a good Thought and Desire, lay hold on it: For thy day may increase this very night, for ought thou knowest, Luke 27. 22. The time shall come (saith Christ) when you shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and shall not see it. Now is the day of Christ upon you, now is Christ offering and preaching himself to you: but if you let this pass, thou mayst desire to have one of the drops of that Blood that hath been offered unto thee, and yet never have it; thou mayst desire to feel one rap of that Spirit that hath knockt at thy heart, and yet go without it; thou mayst entreat for one Dram of that Mercy, that hath been offered, and thou hast rejected, but it shall never be granted to thee. Now henceforth, never grow fruit more on thee: when Repentance come into thy heart more. If now thou wilt not repent, and be converted, the Lord may set it down in his decree from this day forward, that thou mayest stumble about thy sins, but shall never get victory over them; thou mayst ever be mourning for thy corruptions, but never mourn aright for them; thou mayst blunder about Repentance, but never do the Work.

Ezekiel 24. 23. You shall not mourn nor weepe,

but you shall pine away for your iniquities, and mourn one towards another. There is many a soul condemning of God, and not taking up Repentance, while they may have it, upon whom the Plague of God come, that they are ever repenting, and are never able to repent, ever posing upon their sins, but never able to come out of them: they pray, and pray against them, but their prayers moulder away under them: For they shall pine away for their iniquities. What is the reason? He sheweth in the 13 verse; Because I would have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged any more: Because I gave thee Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept, Motion upon Motion, Sacrament upon Sacrament, Sabbath upon Sabbath, and Ordinance upon Ordinance: Because I used all fair means and foul means: I awakened thy Conscience, and stirred up the motions of Grace in thee: But because I would have cleansed thee, and thou wast not cleansed, thou shalt never be cleansed. A fearful Sentence it is, if mens hearts were soundly opened to consider rightly of it.

And as there is a personal Day, so there is national Day; If the Nation turn unto God during that time, then the Nation shall find mercy; but if they neglect that day, then God will hide those things from their eyes, that be long to their peace; as Christ saith of Jeru-

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Jerusalem Luke 19.42 O Jerusalem, if that thou hadst known in this thy day the things that did belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes: In this day, if thou hadst known it during that day, it had been happy for thee: but now the day of grace is gone, the Lord hath concealed it from thee, and thou shalt never perceive it any more.

Some mens days of grace God endeth even in their very Child-hood: Therefore if there be any little ones, and Children here in this Congregation, that are of age to know what belong to an Exhortation, to them I Speak, that they take heed how they rebel against the Commandment of a Father or Mother, or Master, against the teaching of Gods Word: For though you be Children, yet God may inflict judgments upon your heads; for not only the day of Grace, but also the day of Life, may be cut off from Children: as 2 Kings 2. 24. Four and twenty Children were torn in pieces for mocking the Lords Prophet. Some mens day of grace is shut up until their youth, some until their old age, some not until they are a dying, and if they refuse, then they are like, yea, sure to perish for ever: I know the day of grace may have several returns, but at last Gods Trechequer will be finally shut up.

Object. May not a man be called at the ele-

venth or twelfth hour of the day; The day saith
 grace lasteth alwayes: and doth not the Apostle
 stile call the day of Life the day of Grace? an
 2 Cor. 6. 2.

Ans. It is true, the Lord called men at th
 eleventh or twelfth hour: but yet look, and
 you shall see in Matthew twenty, that they were all
 not called at the first hour, nor at the second
 nor third hour, nor at the sixth and ninth hour.
 That is, he doth not say, he found the same
 men that he found at the first, and third, sixth
 and ninth hours, but he saw others standing
 for those that were called at the first hour, if
 come in at the first hour, and they that were
 called at third hour, came in at the third hour
 and they that were called at the sixth and
 ninth hours, came in at the sixth and ninth
 hours. Well, doth God call thee in thy
 Childhood, in thy youth or in thy middle
 age: now at the first, or sixth or ninth hour
 now come in and labour in Gods Vineyard
 and Work out your Salvation with fear and trem
 bling; and make use of the season of grace, 2
 now whiles it is upon you: for if thou be calle
 led at the first hour, the sixth is for another, and
 not for thee: if thou be called the sixth hour, per
 the ninth hour is for others, and not for thee: if
 if thou be called the ninth hour, the eleventh
 hour is for others, and not for thee. The Texter
 saith

Faith: He came and found others standing Idle in the Market place, and said unto them, Why stand ye idle? and they said unto him, no man hath hired us: as if they should say, We have not had any means of Salvation, we have had no Ministers to Preach unto us; but now God calls upon thee to come in, this is the hour and look unto it: If God call thee, say thou come when whether it be at the first or third Hour, at the sixth or ninth hour, lest the Lord in his wrath clap hardness of heart upon thy Soul.

g Object. But you will say: That the day of life, and the day of Grace are parallel'd, and likened one to another: and therefore there is hope so long as a man remains in the Congregation of the living,

Ans. Answer, It is true indeed, That the day of Grace lasteth as long as the day of life.

1. In regard of others, for others are so to exhort them of it; the Master is to look to his people, and to a people to be converted as long as they live.

2. In regard of a mans self; he is bound to believe; for the Commandment of Faith standeth in force on a man so long as he lives: And therefore infidelity and despair cease not to be sins, till a man is actually in Hell: when he is in Hell, then they are no sins, because when he is not commanded to believe, but are
part

The Danger of
part of the punishment of the damned; But
whilst a man lives it is a sin: for men are not
bound to lay hold upon Christ, and to believe
at what hour of their life soever.

3. It may be so said to last all a mans life
long, because it is bounded within the compass
of life; for no man hath a day of grace after
this life.

But what is the meaning of all those Scrip-
tures which shew how God doth deliver up men
unto the spirit of giddiness, and unto the spi-
rit of slumber: And what means the hardning
of mens hearts, and searing of mens Consci-
ences, but only to shew that the day of grace
may end unto a particular man, ten, twenty,
thirty, nay, forty years before his death.

1. Because God may harden mans heart by
Jerem. 13. 10. and deal with them as with
Israel in the Rock, so shut up their hearts that
they shall never melt at any Sermon, never be
wrought upon by any Judgment, God having
closed them up in a Rocky heart, that he said
of them, Can the Blackamore change his skin, or
the Leopard his spots; then may they do good things
are accustomed to do evil. The blackness of the
blackamoor is only in the outside of the skin
yet all the art under the heavens cannot blot
it out: So if once hardness possess the soul, all
the preaching of the Ministers: and all their
mean

By means of grace in the world, can never bring
 out unto that frame and temper as to make it
 melt under the hand of God: I tell thee, thou
 that useth to come unto Sermons day after day
 and refuseth to repent, living still in thy Sins,
 there is no hammer nor no beetle in the world
 more hard than thy Heart: as those Men & Wo-
 men that sit under the Preaching of the Word,
 and hear the Doctrine of life like rain from
 above, beating and knocking on their Con-
 sciences, and on their hearts, to awaken them
 out of their sins, and yet notwithstanding will
 not repent, at last they prove to be deaf Adders
 that stop their ears against the word, charm
 the charmer never so wisely.

2. God may serve mens Consciences: Doth
 thy Conscience tell thee thou art a Lukewarm-
 ing, and wilt thou not be reformed? Doth
 thy conscience tell thee, that thy prayers and
 all thy religion is rotten and unsound, and
 that thy Repentance is Hypocritical and
 caught, & that for all thy vain hopes, thou art
 a Dissembler, and yet remainest in thy sins,
 and wilt thou not be bettered hereby? take
 heed: for that man that runs on in sin against
 the voice of his own conscience, that man
 is the Sin of Saul, 1 Sam. 13.8. God bid
 him stay seven days until Samuel come, Saul
 stays full seven days within one hour, at last
 his

his lust began to bawle? What shall I
 stay for a Prophet thus long? Stay, say
 his Conscience: Why? (says Saul) I wait
 ed so long, euen seven days lacking but one
 hour: Stop (saith God to his Conscience) for
 the Word of God bids thee stay so long, I
 stayed one day, and two days, and six days, and
 seven days, but one hour: Stay (saith his
 Conscience no, he would not: but, I forced
 my self (saith the Text) as if he should say
 I hardened my heart to do it, though the Word
 of the Lord bid me stay, and not do it; yet
 forced my self to do it: What was this man's
 sin? was it his offering of the Sacrifice, and
 calling upon the Lord by Prayer? No, the
 Lord commands us to call upon him in time
 of distress, and being commanded, it was law-
 ful: Was it his sin to meddle with the
 Priests office? No, for he did but appoint the
 Sacrifice, the Priest offered it: What, was
 it the breaking of one hours time? No, for
 he had sinned more against God than so: but
 this was his sin, that he went against his Con-
 science: when God stood in the way, when Con-
 science stood in the way: Conscience said stay
 but he would not stay. And this is the sin
 of many thousands amongst us: Mens Con-
 sciences tell them, that they must not be Drun-
 ards: mens Consciences tell them that they

must not be Idolaters, they must not be Swearers, they must not be Luke-Warm Professors, they must pray better then they do, and have other faith then yet they have, if e-
 ver they mean to be saved : While thou yet a-
 gainst thy Conscience force thy self to go on
 in thy sins, from day to day, and never be re-
 formed? Take heed lest the Lord be provoked
 to set thy sin upon thy head, and shut thy heart,
 and conclude thy eternal destruction.

Object. Suppose I go on in my sin, and follow
 my wicked courses now; What if I seek him here-
 after, and humble my soul before him with Fasting
 and Prayer, and when I lie upon my Death-bed,
 I send a Ticket unto my Minister to pray for me,
 will all this do me no good?

Answ. Surely (saith God, Jer. 15. 1) *Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet
 my affections could not be towards this people :
 I will cast them out of my sight. Wilt thou lie sick
 upon thy Death-bed? Were Samuel, Job, or
 Daniel, the Minister of this Parish, and thou
 shouldst send thy Ticket unto them, desiring
 them to remember thee in their Prayers? At
 Noah stood in the Pulpit, and Job and Daniel
 were here before the Lord for to plead for
 thee, yet he would not hear thee.*

Object. But suppose I humble myself by Fasting
 and Prayer, will not God hear that?

An

Answ. No, if thou neglect the day of Grace
 Jer. 14. 12. When they fast I will not hear them
 and when they offer Oblations, I will not accept
 their cry, but I will consume them by the Sword
 by Famine, and by Pestilence. You may set up
 your fastings, Prayers, and Humiliations
 you may lament and mourn, and pine away
 your selves in your Sins, but it is not all your
 prayers and fastings, it is not all your lamen-
 tations, and mourning, that will do you good
 so long as the Counsel of the Lord is rejected
 Because I called and ye would not answer: there-
 fore you shall call, but I will not hear: They
 thought the Lords ear would always be open
 and that when they called, the Lord would
 have answered, and that the day of grace would
 ever remain, but God saith: I will not hear
 them; They would never have sought, if they
 thought the Lord would not hear them, but
 all their seeking was in vain.

Object. You will say, At what time soever
 sinner repenteth he shall have mercy.

Answ. It is true, if thou repeat from the bot-
 tom of thy heart: but thou maist come with ma-
 ny a degree of Repentance, and yet never re-
 pent whilst thou livest; if thou repent from the
 heart, and root out thy sins, then God will
 put away thy sins, but thou maist go on in Re-
 pentance, and calling upon God, and perform

ing many duties of Religion, and yet be hardened : Look how much religion will stand with self-love, so much thou maist have after the day of grace is gone: Self-love may make a man fly to prayer, and run after Sermons, and go on in many holy duties, and give over many sins. Look how far self-love may drive thee unto heinous duties, so far thou maist go, and yet notwithstanding remain hardened. And therefore let us not delay, nor put off the time of grace, nor let go salvation while it may had : Then shall they call, but I will not answer: He doth not knock down when this time is, it may be it is now, it may be not this seven years, it may be not till thy death.

DOCTRINE. II.

It may be this very day, even this very Sermon, is very Hour, may be thy day that art now in thy sin; that if thou repent not at this very Sermon, thou shalt lose eternal life for ever : Lose the benefit of this Sermon at this time, and thou maist lose eternal Salvation, and never have it more, be a Thief that robbed this day, how doth he know but this one day may bring him to the gallows? So the man that sins this day, how doth he know but that this very days work may bring him to Hell? Deut, 32. 35. To God belongs

belongs vengeance, their feet shall slide in due time. Then if a man sin against him, he may stand a day, and to morrow, and many days: but when the due time comes, even the time which God hath set, then up goes his heels, he shall slide and break his neck: the Hour-glass runs in Heaven, and thou seest not when the sand comes to the bottom, but when 'tis out, that down thou goest to Hell for ever.

There was one resolved to kill Julius Cæsar such a day: the night before a friend sent him a Letter to acquaint him with it, but being at Supper and busie: I will not look upon it now, saith he, to morrow is a new day: The next day when he should have read his Letter he was stabbed: Whence this Proverb came in Greed: To Morrow is a New Day: God sends thee a Letter and a Message from Heaven to call thee to repent, and come out of your sins, or for ever to Hell: to day be converted and sanctified, or for ever be hardened. Dost thou refuse to hearken to day, and puttest it off to morrow? It may be to morrow may be a day of Gods wrath, and then thou maist be hardened, seared, and bound over unto the great Day of Gods Vengeance: To morrow God may set the decree upon thy Soul, that thou shalt never repent. Therefore if thou refuse this, thou refuseth all; For what know

Deferring Repentance.

knowest thou, but this very day may be thy day?

The reason is, because God's patience is in his own Breast: And who can tell how long it will last? Hast thou Moses his glass-window into look in God's secret Counsel? Hast thou a key-hole to look into God's Treasure? Canst thou stand on tiptoe, to look over God's shoulder to look into God's Decree, to see how long his patience will last? It may be God hath suffered thee till this day, thou art guilty of ten thousand sins, and yet he is patient towards thee: God hath stayed thus long for thee, that thou shalt know I know not how many Deaths; God hath borne thus long with thee, thou hast sinned I know not how many Lyes, profaned I know not how many Sabbaths, contemned I know not how many Ordinances, and slighted I know not how many judgments: Yet God's patience is in his own breast, it is the long sufferance of God. Thou must say, I would I might have it ten mornings, and this seven years, but alas it is his long sufferance, and not thine: how dost thou know when he will conclude it: It may be this day as well as ten mornings, Joel 2. 13. Rent your hearts, and not your Garments (saith the Prophet) for the Lord is gracious and merciful. The word (for) hath a great deal of force in it.

First, It is a descriptivum (for) he is a gracious and a merciful God : Therefore rent thy heart and let thy Soul burst within thee, that thou hast sinned against him, for he is a merciful God, and it may be he will pardon all thy sins and heal all thy rebellions committed against him.

Secondly, It is an upbraiding (for) upbraiding thee for thy sins: rent thy heart therefore why? He is a patient God: wilt thou go on in thy sins against such a patient God? an rebel against such a loving Father that hath loved thee with so much compassion? Rent thy heart, for he is patient.

Thirdly, It is a comforting and encouragin (for) Rent thy heart, for there is encouragement for thee to repent, give over thy sins, and go to the Throne of Grace: for there is much Mercy to welcome thee, and great patience for to bid thee welcome home, and abundance of grace for to encourage thee: Therefore rent thy heart, and come home unto the Lord, for he is patient and long suffering.

Fourthly, It is a fore-warning (for:) Repent your hearts, for the Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness. Yet his Mercy lasteth, yet his patience endureth, yet he hath all his Attributes, and yet is pleased to manifest the same, Will tendring
gra

grace and mercy unto thee. Oh turn unto him while these endure, or else thou shalt perish forever.

Fifthly, It is a threatening (for) Now he is Gracious, now he is merciful, but his mercy will end, his patience will end: and then if thou hast not rent thy heart before, it will be too late then: Therefore, as ever thou lovest thine own soul, now rent thine heart, and turn unto God.

It is Gods own Proclamation, The Lord is slow to anger and of great mercy, and forgiving of iniquity and sin. Yea, what man soever be he, that humbles his soul before him, he shall find Grace and Mercy with him; yea, abundance of Mercy pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin: yea, any thing: Not but a soul come prostrate before him, humbling his soul, he will pardon his sin: But as it follows in the words, He will by no means pardon the Guilty: If notwithstanding all Gods Patience and Mercy, if thou go on in thy sin, the Lord will never forgive thee, but will visit thy sins upon thee unto the third and fourth Generation, because thou hast withstood the day of Grace. Wretched men live on in their sins, as if to be an Angel from Heaven should cry unto them, and tell them, yet God will be good unto them, yet God will not show them Mercy,

and forbear them. Beloved, let your Conscience answer if ever you heard the Lord God say to any of you, thus long I will forbear you, &c., God's patience is in his own Breast, and therefore no man knows how long it will last.

Reas. 2. A second reason is, Because God's patience giveth no marks or inklings of it, before it ends: Commonly when God strikes a man with death, he gives some signs or warnings of it before, as Sickness, and pains, and gray hairs, and many sorrows, &c. Now because thy life is in God's hands, thou carest not for it, but ventureth to go on in thy Sins, hoping to have some Warning, though thousands be cut off without it; But the day of grace may come to an end, and yet thou never have an inkling or warning of it before-hand, by Aches and Pains, as if the Lord should say, Now thou shalt dye, now I will take thee out of the world. But when the Lord taketh away the day of Grace from a man, though the Spiritual man may take some notice of it, yet there is no sensible apparition of it, but after the day of grace is set up in a man, he may be as strong and lusty as before, he may come to Church as well after as before, perform Religious Duties, and do many good things as well after as before, As Saul went on in duties of Religion, as well after as before

before. As Saul went on in duties of Religion as well after Samuel had pronounced the Lords Doom upon him; how many times was he offering Sacrifice unto the Lord after the Prophet told him, that he was a man rejected: How many good speeches came from him: As when Samuel met him, he saluted him with these words; Blessed be thou of the Lord, I pray thee turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord: A man would have thought that Saul had been a good convert. No, no, before all this his judgement and doom was set upon him: GOD steals upon him, and sayes nothing, he claps his Plague upon their Souls, and holds his peace.

Isa. 42. 14. I have a long time held my peace, I have been still, and refrained my self; Now I will cry like a travelling woman, I will destroy and devour at once. The Lord shews here how he deals with men, they go on in their sins, but the Lord holds his peace: They provoke him every day, but the Lord refrains his anger: But now all at once, his wrath breaketh forth upon them, Psalm 64. 7. God will shoot an Arrow at them suddenly, their stroke shall be at once, The Lord suddenly shoots a swift Arrow at thee: no sooner it's shot, but it enters into thy bowels. When the Lord comes upon a man, he comes suddenly: When he ends the

day of grace upon him, he doth it suddenly. He ended the day of Grace on the Scribes and Pharisees, even in the very Sermon time: while Christ was Preaching unto them, they were delivered up to hardness of heart: So many were delivered up to hardness of heart, in the time of Hosea's Prophecy, Hos. 4. 17. Ephraim is joyned to Idols, let him alone (saith GOD:) As if he should say, Sermon, let him alone: Preacher let him alone: Spirit, let him alone: Christ let him alone, let him alone. Beloved, If we stand out against God, and reject the day of Grace the Lord may say, World, let such a man alone, and never convert him: Christ, let such a man alone, and never redeem him: Spirit, let such a man alone, and never sanctifie him: Sacraments, let such a man alone, and never seal up any comforts unto him: a fearful sign that men are come to this hour: Do we not see that men come to the World, and the World lets them alone in their sins? Do not men come to the Sacrament, and the Sacrament leaves them still in their filthiness: Men come unto good duties, but good duties let them alone, and do them no good. And this is the condition of many thousands in the World.

Therefore I think upon this you that have made a league with your Sins, and an a

ment with Hell, hear this delivered to you this day, that the day of grace may be ended: and God may come and clap his Curse upon men, & never give them any inkling of it at all.

A third reason is, because God reckons upon every hour: If God keeps not a strict account of time, how many Sermons you have had, how many mercies you have enjoyed, how many crosses hath he warned you by: If God kept not a true tale and account of every hours time, you might rub on many days and months and years, and spend much time in fulfilling of your Lusts; but God keepeth a reckoning of these things, yea, of every hour, and of every minute, Acts 17. 30. The times of ignorance, God regardeth not: but now he admonisheth all men to repent.

Olas, when men live in their sins, through blindness and ignorance, and know not God, the Lord takes no such strict notice of them, but lets them go on longer: But when the Lord sends them his Word and Gospel, and affords them the means of grace, he doth the more strictly look unto them, and takes the more exact account of them; before they had the means of grace, the Lord winked at them, and did not so narrowly watch them, but looked over mens ignorance (as the Original hath it) but now God sends his Word and Gospel,

Gospel, he admonisheth all men to repent, he
 thinks at not an hour, but sets it down how
 oft thou hast had exhortation from the Mini-
 ster, how often thou hast had warning by sick-
 nesses and afflictions, how often thou hast had
 checks from thine own Conscience, how ma-
 ny admonitions thou hast had from thy
 friends, how many times thou hast had the
 sound of the Gospel to sound in thine ears
 to bring thee home unto God, John 2. 7. 11.
 This is the first beginning of Miracles that Jesus
 did, John 4. 51. This is the second Miracle that
 Jesus did, saith the Text. God sets down, this
 is the first, this is the second time: This is the
 second Epistle I wrote to you, saith Paul. 2 Cor
 13. This is the third time I wrote to you, 1 Cor
 13. That when I come I will not spare: Such
 God sets it down in his Catalogue, This is
 the first time that I have warned this man
 this is the second time, this is the third time
 that when I come I will not spare.

The Lord counts how long he hath sought
 unto thee, and intreated thee by his mercies, and
 how long he hath assured thee by his Word
 how long he hath warned thee by his judgements,
 how oft he hath smote thy heart with
 fears, and thy Conscience with terrors
 Now, if for all this thou wilt not return, sum-
 is it with God to cast thee down to Hell fo-
 ever.

The fourth Reason and last : It is a Wonder
 that the day of Grace is not ended already ; and
 that the sinner is not in Hell : ~~When~~ a thing in this
 kind is looked for to be done , it is a wonder
 that it is not done. It is a wonderful mercy of
 a God unto this wretched one , that yet the day of
 his grace is continued among us , in regard of our
 long fear and expectation to the contrary : for
 from the highest to the lowest , we have highly
 rebelled more and more , and have provoked
 God to his very face. What contempt of
 Gods Word ? What neglecting of Gods
 Ordinances ? What profanation of Gods
 Sabbaths ? What scoffing and deriding of
 Gods Servants ? How doth Wickedness and
 Profaneness stand up in the highest Room ,
 and climb up into the highest Chamber ? But as a
 whore condemned to die , being with Child ,
 is reprieved for a time , until her child be
 brought forth : So this Land hath gone a
 whoring from GOD , yet so long as God
 hath some Children to be brought forth , which
 are not yet come unto the birth , he lets his
 Grace and Gospel continue until these Chil-
 dren be brought forth : Therefore now (be-
 willed) if we stick at the Birth , and come
 not forth , an hundred to one but we shall
 miscarry.

When

When Christ comes first to thy soul, witnesseth Grace and Mercy to thee, if thou wilt repent and amend: Yea, he witnesseth Forgiveness of Sins, Redemption and Salvation, if thou wilt believe: but if not, will be a swift Witness against thee, Mat. 1. 23. If thou continue and goest on in thy sin, Agree with thine adversary, while thou art in the way, quickly, Mat. 5. 25. Now God is in the way with thee, Christ and his Spirit are in the way with thee, thou need'st not note this. Who shall go up to Heaven, and bring down his Spirit to thee? Christ's Spirit is now knocking at thy heart, and now God offers his mercy to thee now thou art in the way, now he calls unto thee to accept of his Mercy, now he commands thee to take Christ, now he has him calling to thy heart, now he tendereth Grace unto thee, embrace it: Now receive Christ, and make up thy peace with him: Remember the saying of the Apostle, 2 Cor. 13. Examine your selves whether you be in the Faith. Prove your selves: Know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except you be reprobates? As if the Apostle should say, I have been an Apostle to you this year and half, I have preached thus and thus long unto you; I have wrote one Epistle to you, to reform those abuses that were among

you: and now I write this second Epistle, to declare the whole Will and Counsel of God to you.

Now cast up your reckoning, examine your selves, and make up your account: see if thou hast gained Christ. O, I have Christ (saith one) I have Christ (saith another:) I, but prove it, saith the Apostle, and try your selves: Know you not that by this time, Christ is in you, or else you be reprobates; as if he should say, if yet Christ be not in you and grace wrought in your hearts, if yet you lye weltring in your sins, and go on in your wicked wayes, it is to be feared you are reprobates: you for not obeying, or we for not delibering the Truth of God unto you. But I trust that ye shall know that we are not Reprobates: verse 6. God forbid that this Word should ever be spoken unto any Soul in this Congregation: But this let me say, Is there any man here that goes on in his lusts, and in his carnal course of life, in pride, security, hardness of heart, and impenitency, that man hath not the soundness of grace? He hath a fearful sign and brand of a Reprobate, whose Conscience is stilled: it is a fearful sign. If he be not a Reprobate before God, yet he is one that is not approved, but for the present in a wretched and miserable Condition.

Now

Now is the time of Grace, wherein I
 hath spoken to your souls, remember the
 Vengeance that is coming towards you, if
 be rejected. Now the Lords Fallings
 ready, his Oren and Ship are slain a
 la t on the board, Christ is sacrificed, a
 his blood is shed, and the grace of our Lo
 Jesus Christ is tendered you: You that ha
 some Grace, get more Grace: You th
 have no Grace, get Grace and Christ, a
 take heed of neglecting any opportunity
 Grace; for that may come unto thee in a
 hour, that will neber come again.

F I N I S.







The Danger of
Deferring
Repentance.

